India's stand on Military *take* over in Pakistan

1574. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the military take over of the Pakistan regime, India had taken a stand at the recent meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Govemment held at Durban that the overthrow of the Pakistani democratic regime by the Army and the present military regime there was entirely unconstitutional; and

(b) if so, what decision was taken by the CHOGM in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. India had pointed out that it was essential that the Commonwealth did not become a participant in the consequences of the coup in Pakistan. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting condemned the unconstitutional overthrow of the democratically elected government in Pakistan on 12th October 1999. The meeting called for the restoration of civilian democratic rule without delay. A decision was taken to endorse the suspension of the military regime in Pakistan, from the Councils of the Commonwealth, pending the restoration of democracy in that country. The Meeting urged that prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and others detained with him be released immediately and that the rule of law in Pakistan be duly observed. Commonwealth would also keep the situation in Pakistan under review and would consider adoption of further measures, if progress to democracy is not made speedily by Pakistan.

Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group

1575. SMT. VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India refused to become a member of Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) that has been mandated by CHOGM to closely monitor the trial of the deposed Prime Minister of Pakistan and the process of restoration of democracy therein;

(b) whether India was approached by other member nations to become member of the group. If so, what were the terms of reference of the group; and the reasons for refusal?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) No formal request for Membership of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group was received by India.

China's capability to make Neutron Bomb

1576. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention had been drawn to the report in the Indian Express of July 16, 1999, stating that China had announced that it had mastered the technology to build a neutron bomb;

(b) if so, Government's reaction and response thereto, in the context of peace in this sub-continent and global peace; and

(c) what is the reaction of other nuclear weapon states including US and UK?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. In the context of the allegations of espionage by China at US nuclear weapons laboratories, the Chinese government published selective details of its nuclear weapons programme, including the capability to make an enhanced radiation weapon (neutron bomb).

(b) Government monitors carefully strategic modernisation programmes in the region and beyond. Government remains fully committed to taking all necessary steps to effectively safeguard India's security and national interests in accordance with its own threat perceptions.

(c) The US has said that the Chinese nuclear capability was no secret and that the annou ncement did not come; as a surprise. The UK indicated that it was hard to see how the development of such weapons contributed towards the global elimiination of nuclear weapons. There has been no official reaction from Russia and France.